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ABSTRACT

Community bilingual education, which utilizes the community's language for educational instruction and values the community culture, narrows the communication gap between the community and the educational institutions. Thus, in the spring of 1976, "Aztlan en Kansas: Asistencia Tecnologica" was initiated to provide technical assistance to Kansas' Mexican Americans in the development of leadership skills which could then be applied for the improvement of the whole community. Primarily conducted through workshops, seminars, and information dissemination, the program aimed to help the participants gain leadership skills such as reinforcing ideas in a group, using proper methods for advocating ideas and actions, and evaluating goals and objectives. Program content included: climate setting, group processes, needs assessment, data gathering techniques, group planning and prioritizing, definition of goals and objectives, and evaluation of achievement. The program utilized a Laubach Model in that as a workshop was conducted by the project, community leaders were identified who then agreed to conduct a second leadership workshop with support from the project. Groups of community leaders (about 20 persons) were identified in about 15 communities. While the work that was done by the completion of the project was "highly" successful, the "time limitation and difficulty of scheduling workshops at a time that was convenient to participants put a rather constraining obstacle in administering the program". (NQ)

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COMMUNITY BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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COMMUNITY BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Introduction

If we accept the axiom that citizen participation in the decision-making processes is highly valued in our democratic system of government, then we must accept that the process of community bilingual education is an essential strategy to help bring this about. Philosophically and by definition, bilingual education has community as an essential component. Offering instruction in a language and culture that a community feels most comfortable with, along with the nation's official language, is the essence of community bilingual education. It narrows the communication gap between the community and our educational institutions, which for a long time has been getting wider and wider, especially in communities of language minorities. It also enriches and strengthens our country by becoming a participatory democracy, as well as a pluralistic society. In addition, community bilingual education could help bring about "mass education" for as we all know a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Need for Bilingual Education Approaches

It has been reported in the 1970 Census that over 33.2 million United States citizens speak a language other than English (U.S. Civil Rights Commission, May 1975, p. 10). In the report to the President and Congress by the United States Commissioner of Education, United States Office of Education (Nov. 1976, p. 1), it is estimated that 15 million persons in the United States are in need of bilingual education in one form or another. In view of this need, it was comforting to learn from this same report that a survey in 1975 showed that 218 teacher training institutions were offering training for teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. On the other hand, only 24 per cent of the 15 million, or 3.6 million persons in need of bilingual education are served by our elementary and secondary education institutions. This leaves a potentially large clientele (11.4 million) which could be served by community bilingual education (U.S. Office of Education, Nov. 1976, p. 1).

Prior to his election, President Carter stated, "We have a tremendous need to develop more sense of community throughout the nation, and I feel that the community education concept, if fully implemented could make an impact in meeting this need." (Educational Considerations, front cover page, Spring 1977). On March 18, 1977, President Carter made the following statement in response

to a request for a statement for inclusion in Educational Considerations (Spring 1977, front cover page), a publication of the College of Education, Kansas State University:

> Community education enhances a sense of ownership and belonging to the community. It encourages citizens to share in the responsibility for services they deem vital to their community. Community education is a means for citizens to join arms and focus on issues, for families to learn and play together, for learning to be a continuous life long process and for public facilities to be used for this purpose.
>
> In the Office of Education, $3.5 million is expended annually to this end. Current grant recipients are State Educational Agencies, local school districts and institutions of higher education.
>
> These demonstration projects provide technical assistance to communities, train community leaders and provide funds for communities to implement cultural, recreational, educational, and other services deemed necessary by the community.

A Community Bilingual Education Program

In the Spring of 1976, a project very similar to the description given above was initiated by the cooperative efforts of the Curriculum and Instruction Department, College of Education, and the Division of Continuing Education at Kansas State University. The project was financed by Health, Education and Welfare, United States Office of Education, Title I, Higher Education Act of 1965.

The program titled "Aztlan en Kansas: Assistencia Technologica (Technological Assistance to Mexican American People in Kansas)" had as its purpose to provide technical assistance to a target population group, Mexican Americans, in the State of Kansas in the development of leadership skills which could then be applied for the improvement of the community as whole. Although the technical assistance was primarily focused on the target group, the community workshop sessions were open to all interested persons in the community. As a result, the workshops were conducted using a bilingual multicultural approach.

Of the various problem areas identified, the following seemed most pressing: Parent/community school relations; Personal development; Economic development; and Community development. The community problem focused on lack of leadership and group skills necessary for successful

participation in our democratic and economic structures throughout the State of Kansas.

The overall objective of the program was then to help the participants gain leadership skills such as the following: 1) Climate setting in groups; 2) Reinforcing ideas in a group; 3) Using proper methods for advocating ideas and actions; 4) Planning prioritizing; 5) Public relations with the larger community, including group image; and 6) Evaluation in achieving goals and objectives.

The technical assistance program operations were primarily conducted through workshops and/or seminars as well as through information dissemination (i.e., mass media, publications, pamphlets, and manuals).

The program content included the following: 1) Climate setting; 2) Group processes (roles for effective group, leadership traits, functions); 3) Needs assessment; 4) Data gathering techniques; 5) Group planning and prioritizing; 6) Defining goals and objectives; and 7) Evaluation of achievement. A more detailed description of the content of the program may be found in the facilitator's manual, the participant's workbook, and a resource book.

The program method utilized a Laubach Model in that as a workshop was conducted by the project, community leaders were identified who then agreed to conduct a second leadership workshop with support from the project.

Through the utilization of the Laubauch Model, the intent was to train a cadre (community leaders) who would agree to conduct follow-up workshops in order to reach as many community people as possible and hopefully develop a grassroots approach. Groups of community leaders (about 20 persons) were identified in about 15 communities. While the work that was done by the completion of the project was highly successful, the time limitation and difficulty of scheduling workshops at a time that was convenient to participants put a rather constraining obstacle in administering this program.

As a spin-off from the Leadership Training Project came the formulation of the Parent/Community School Component for the Bilingual Multicultural Education Project at the College of Education, Kansas State University, which currently is funded by the United States Office of Education, Title VII, ESEA for the amount of $150,000. The Leadership Training Program has given impetus to the initiation of a two-phase program for Parent/Community school relations: Phase I - Leadership training for parents and community personnel as it relates to the local school agencies; Phase II - Application of leadership skills and follow-through training as paraprofessionals in the school setting. Through its Parent/Community School Component and its Preservice and Inservice Instructional/

Training Components, the Bilingual Multicultural Education Project will continue to help not only in meeting the needs of the community but also to facilitate the communication between the Community and the University.

Conclusion

In our present time of rapid decrease in enrollment in our educational institutions due not only to the decrease in birth rate, but also as a result of people's disenchantment with our schools, educators cannot afford the luxury of remaining aloof and expect the community to make all the sacrifices needed to continue benefiting from schooling. The decrease in enrollment is particularly noticeable at post-secondary education institutions where the clientele is at an age level where they may choose whether to attend or not. At the lower grades where attendance is mandated by law, the clientele has no choice but to suffer the consequences of personal distruction or become a societal drop-out. In many cases this is due to the lack of communication between the community and our educational institutions.

Through community bilingual education, which utilizes the language of the community for educational instruction and values the community culture, the gap between the community and our educational institutions may be narrowed to a point where the ideal of "mass education" may become

a reality, which could then enhance citizen participation in the decision-making process in our democratic system of government.

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